

Chapter XVIII - Water Supply and Utilities Plan

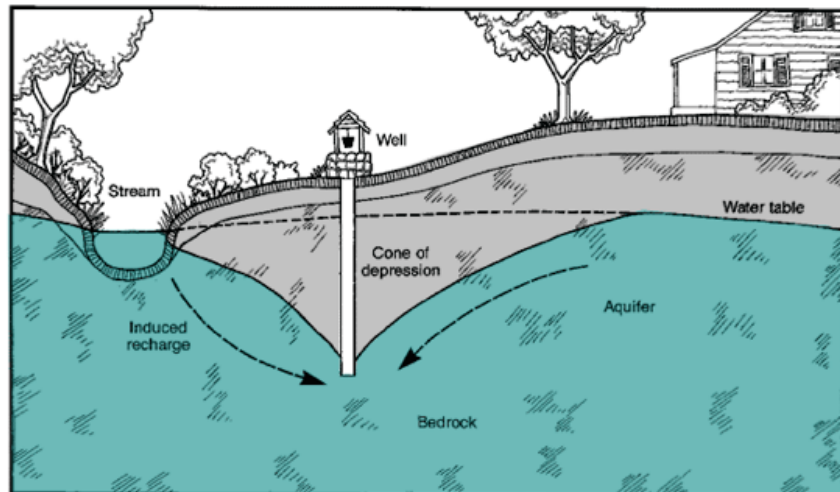
Introduction

This *Water Supply and Utilities Plan* is intended to address specific requirements of the *Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code*, Section 301(b) which specifically mandates the preparation of:

“a plan for the reliable supply of water, considering current and future water resources availability, uses and limitations, including provisions adequate to protect water supply sources. Any such plan shall be generally consistent with the State Water Plan and any applicable water resources plan adopted by a river basin commission. It shall also contain a statement recognizing that:

- (1) Lawful activities such as extraction of minerals impact water supply sources and such activities are governed by statutes regulating mineral extraction that specify replacement and restoration of water supplies affected by such activities.
- (2) Commercial agriculture production impacts water supply sources.

The above statement is fully incorporated, by reference, in this plan. Wayne County’s commercial agriculture industry has not, historically, required large amounts of water for irrigation or agricultural processing as in the case of some other regions. Nonetheless, water supply is essential to dairy operations and certain other activities and, therefore, agriculture remains a priority use for the local water supply.



Source: [Pennsylvania Water Resources Education Network](#)

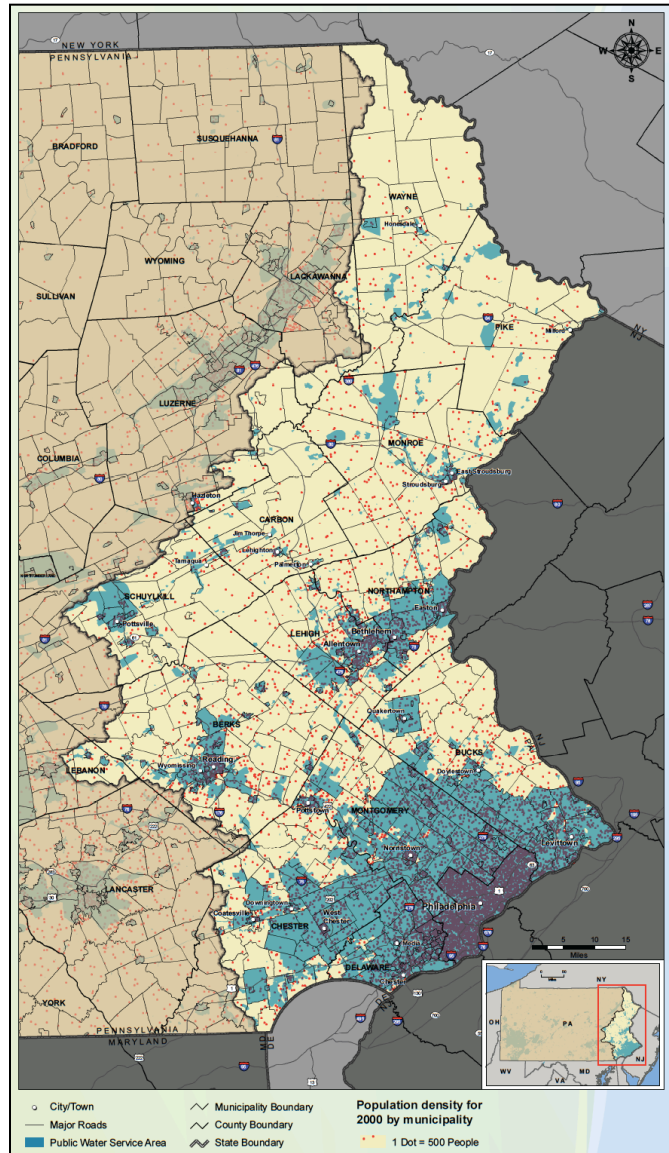
The demands of water for mining of natural gas in Wayne County during the exploration and drilling phases could be considerable. The Department of Environmental Protection and both the Delaware and Susquehanna River Basin Commissions are addressing this issue. The economic importance of this industry to the region demands these matters be dealt with expeditiously while also protecting its abundant water supply, a key resource and marketable comparative advantage

Wayne County Comprehensive Plan Update

in attracting tourism, securing other economic growth and ensuring a high quality of life for residents and visitors.

The *Community Facilities Analysis* and *Natural Resources Analysis* (Sections III and VI, respectively, of this *Comprehensive Plan*) outline some of the important facts with respect to Wayne County's water supply. These include the following:

- The Catskill geologic formation is the most important source of ground water throughout Wayne County with more wells drilled into this group than any other. This formation and others associated with it contain large supplies of underground water. Yields are typically good and water supply is not the issue in Wayne County that it is in many other areas of Pennsylvania and upstate New York.
- The majority of Wayne County residents are served by individual water supply wells. There are, nonetheless, both public and private central water systems throughout the County, many of them serving small communities. Most of the service is provided by five water companies, including the Southern Wayne County Municipal Authority system, which serves the Hideout in Lake and Salem Townships. Public water supply service areas are depicted in blue on the map above, along with population density, demonstrating the lack of major impacts on the water supply in Wayne County compared to other parts of the Delaware River watershed.
- There are no communities with pressing water supply needs, all the major existing systems having been substantially upgraded over the last two decades.



Excerpt from [*Pennsylvania Water Plan*](#)

The [*Pennsylvania State Water Plan*](#) includes Wayne County in two specific regions for planning purposes; the Upper/Middle Susquehanna and the Delaware River watersheds (see Watersheds

Wayne County Comprehensive Plan Update

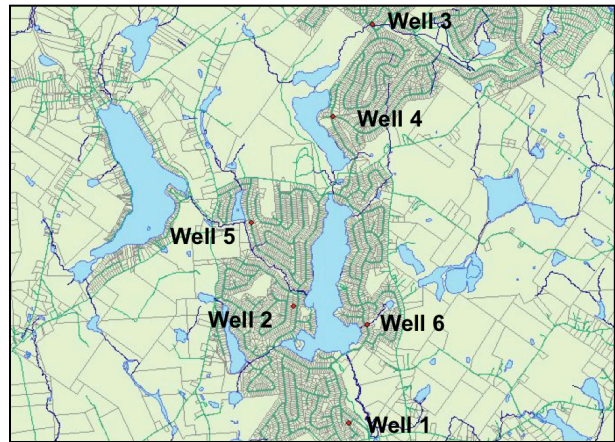
Map at end of this Chapter). These, in turn, are broken down into sub-basins. Wayne County includes land in the Shehawken-Rattlesnake Creeks, Lackawaxen River, Wallenpaupack Creek and Upper Lehigh River sub-basins of the Delaware basin. It also includes land within the Great Bend Susquehanna River and Lackawanna River sub-basins of the Susquehanna River region.

The *State Water Plan*, while it includes no specific recommendations for Wayne County, does identify principles for each planning region, which are intended to suggest actions by both counties and municipalities as well as the Commonwealth itself. These include the following for the Delaware River region:

- Linking land use decisions and water resources management to further require consideration of water resources management, flood control, storm water management and sewage management in land use decisions, infrastructure funding, construction decisions and grant decisions.
- Improving management of water resources and waterway corridors to reduce damages from extreme conditions through control of stormwater, identification of riparian corridors and flood plains, maintenance of their natural functions and maximizing of the use of water conservation techniques to reduce water use and maintain supply.

Upper/Middle Susquehanna River region principles include:

- Protecting important headwater habitats and recharge areas by focusing on forested land use practices and potential water resources impacts resulting from natural gas extraction; including promotion of sound land use practices, appropriate zoning of public water supply recharge areas and implementation of water well construction standards.
- Addressing the consequences of acidic drainages on receiving streams to improve and protect water quality and aquatic ecosystems, and to enhance the availability and utilization of water.



Hideout Water Well Locations
Source: Wilkes University Geo Environmental
Sciences and Environmental Engineering Department

The [*Water Resources Plan for the Delaware River Basin*](#), which covers the bulk of Wayne County, incorporates these principles. It also suggests several land use and other policies consistent with those recommended in this *Wayne County Comprehensive Plan* and poses a question of whether or not “current growth management plans and zoning are realistic, given

Wayne County Comprehensive Plan Update

water supply availability.” Wayne County has excellent water supplies, both in quantity and in quality. Its population is also low and its growth rate is modest in comparison to national trends. Indeed, that growth rate is currently decelerating. It also has up to date land use regulations that address water supply and related issues in all municipalities. Therefore, the answer to this question is that planning and zoning measures already in place are realistic for all growth that can reasonably be anticipated at this point.



Aqua PA Water Tank - Honesdale

The [Susquehanna River Basin Commission Comprehensive Plan](#) offers more detailed recommendations but with much more emphasis on water use and less on land use. Recommendations of this *Comprehensive Plan* are consistent with that document, which raises no particular issues with the Wayne County portions of its watershed.

Public Input

The community surveys conducted of residents and vacation homeowners to ascertain views on the needs of Wayne County asked respondents identify the five most important needs with respect to making Wayne County “a better place to live.” Residents who responded ranked water supplies as the third lowest priority need out 43 possibilities, it being selected by only 2% of all those individuals surveyed. Storm water management was selected by 3% and the addressing water pollution was selected by 6%, indicating residents did not perceive any of these issues as being particularly important to address in any further detail.

This should not be taken to imply a lack of need for current protections but, rather, as an expression that current efforts are sufficient. A second question asked respondents to indicate how they ranked these same items as problems for the County. Water supplies ranked as the fourth lowest priority in this instance being cited by 8% of those surveyed while stormwater management and water pollution were listed by 12% each.

Vacation home owners surveyed gave somewhat higher priorities to each of the water issues, ranking them all in the middle of the list but, again, they were not cited often, water pollution being the most often identified need and being selected by only 7% of those surveyed. Stormwater management was the most identified water problem and it was selected by 4% of vacation home owners surveyed.

Overall, it is clear Wayne County residents and vacationers do not perceive major needs or problems with the existing water supply systems serving the County or the water resources on which they depend.

Wayne County Comprehensive Plan Update

Recommendations

Wayne County's water supply and utility needs are currently being addressed more than adequately by local officials, private utilities and municipal authorities. Notwithstanding this, there are some specific items that merit attention over the next several years. These include the following:

1. The County Planning Department and individual municipalities should review and, where necessary, update land use regulations to ensure appropriate hydrogeologic studies or other acceptable evidence of water supplies are provided in the case of large land developments.
2. The County Planning Department should continue to provide technical assistance, when requested, to municipalities, private utilities and municipal authorities in projecting growth and water supply demands.
3. The County Planning Department should monitor the activities of both river basin commissions, the Department of Environmental Protection and other agencies to ensure a proper balancing of interests in addressing water supply needs. The *Susquehanna River Basin Commission Comprehensive Plan*, which addresses a wide range of needs, including economic demands, provides a good model for achieving such a balance. The County should encourage a similar approach by the Delaware River Basin Commission to ensure the economic development needs of the County are not ignored.
4. The County should, through Penn State Cooperative Extension and other agencies, attempt to improve public awareness with regard to the need for water conservation and water quality testing in advance of natural gas exploration.

